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KT photo | **Tim Bath**

House of Burgess: What's left to say about Trump?

Only congressional Republicans can save us now

By Rob Burgess
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Starting with my Aug. 12, 2015 column, “Enter the GOP clown car,” 64 of my last 114 weekly columns have mentioned Donald Trump. Since then, basically every other one has circled back to the same subject. In that first column I mentioned, I was chronicling the Aug. 6, 2015 initial Republican primary election debate hosted by Fox News Channel and Facebook at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio when I described Trump as “not a politician, but an entertainer; a vile stain on humanity who owned the stage all night.”

In the subsequent months, I watched and wrote about all 21 Republican and Democratic primary debates. In my final entry of the primary season — my May 3, 2016 column, “Cruz, Trump-free state voting guide” — I used my final opportunity before we here in Indiana cast our ballots to say: “In all that time, if I somehow did not communicate the idea that entrusting … Trump with the nuclear launch codes would be a mistake, then I apologize for being unclear.”

And, then, to my complete shock and horror, Trump was, in fact, given the nuclear launch codes. (Thanks, Electoral College!) I kept writing about Trump because I couldn’t stand by and allow this to become normalized.

This is not normal.

In the past few weeks, though, I found I’ve hit something of a wall. It seems almost everyone in a position to do anything about Trump knows what’s up, even if they won’t admit it in public.

“I think Secretary [of State Rex] Tillerson, Secretary [of Defense James] Mattis, and Chief of Staff [John] Kelly are those people that help separate our country from chaos,” Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tennessee, told reporters Oct. 4 on Capitol Hill.

After Trump predictably blasted Corker on Twitter, Corker wasted no time firing back.

“It’s a shame the White House has become an adult day care center. Someone obviously missed their shift this morning,” Corker tweeted Oct. 8.

In an interview the next day with Jonathan Martin of The New York Times, Corker — the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who has decided not to run for re-election — went further:

• “I know for a fact that every single day at the White House it’s a situation of trying to contain him.”

• “He concerns me. I mean he would have to concern anyone who cares about our nation.”

• “Sometimes I feel like he’s on a reality show of some kind, you know, when he’s talking about these big foreign policy issues. And, you know, he doesn’t realize that, you know, that we could be heading towards World War III with the kinds of comments that he’s making.”

Probably the most significant quote was when Martin asked: “Have you talked to other colleagues who feel the same way but who aren’t speaking as candidly as you are in the Senate?”

“Oh yeah. Are you kidding me? Oh yeah,” Corker responded.

This was the same week when Tillerson repeatedly refused to directly deny calling Trump a “f------ moron” after the president asked for a tenfold increase in the size of our nuclear arsenal during a meeting this summer, according to an Oct. 11 NBC News report by Courtney Kube, Kristen Welker, Carol E. Lee and Savannah Guthrie. (The Department of Defense and Trump later denied both.)

But, wait, it gets worse.

“One former official even speculated that Kelly and [Mattis] have discussed what they would do in the event Trump ordered a nuclear first strike. ‘Would they tackle him?’ the person said,” reported Vanity Fair’s Gabriel Sherman on Oct. 11.

Here’s how I see it: Pretty much everyone in The White House and Congress

knows Trump isn’t fit for the job. They whisper this to each other, with the exception of Corker, who has nothing to lose because he’ll never have to face voters again.

Please, congressional Republicans. Think of your children. This will only get worse. Are tax cuts or the next election or whatever is keeping you silent worth all this? Do something.

I’m not saying this is the last thing I’ll ever write about Trump. (He still is president, after all.) But, this is me throwing up my hands. I’m at a loss. What’s that phrase the kids are using these days? Oh, yeah: Jesus take the wheel.

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